

RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MINUTES OF Tuesday, August 25, 2009 MEETING

Board Members Present: John Rupp, Edward Field; William Kennedy; Michael Lewis; Rochelle Lee; Jerome Williams; and Stephen Durkee.

Absent: Thomas Deller

Also Present: Alfred J. Moscola (General Manager); Lori Caron Silveira (Outside General Counsel); Andrew Prescott (Outside Labor Counsel); Henry Kinch; Maureen Neira; Mark Therrien; and Ellen Mandly.

Agenda Item 1: General Manager's Report

The General Manager reported that the first of the 24 new Gillig buses has arrived. He discussed the features of the new bus and said he and staff will inspect the bus and once they are satisfied the remaining 23 buses will be built to the same specifications. He said the bus will be parked at the door and invited the Board to view it after the meeting.

Mr. Moscola said on August 18th he received bids from five hybrid bus manufacturers in response to the RFP for 63 hybrid vehicles. The five bidders were: Diamond (formerly Orion), Nova, Gillig, Nabbie and New Flyer. He said he is working with staffs to review the bids and that pricing is due back on September 19th and he hopes to come before the Board with an award recommendation in October.

Agenda Item 2: Ferry Update

Next Mr. Moscola discussed the ferry/water taxi service and said this is the first season this 49 passenger vessel will be in service. After many mechanical problems the vessel finally went into service on August 21st and after transporting 55 people that day and 58 people the next the ferry again experienced mechanical difficulties. The ferry is currently out of service and in dry dock awaiting repairs.

Mr. Durkee asked where the ferry was dry docked and Mr. Moscola said the boatyard is in Bristol. Mr. Durkee asked how many runs the ferry had been scheduled for and Mr. Moscola replied 5 roundtrips daily between Providence and Newport. Mr. Rupp asked if the ferry had carried 50+ passengers per roundtrip and Mr. Moscola said it carried 50+ per day.

He was asked the fare and Mr. Moscola responded \$14.00 one-way. Mr. Williams asked if RIPTA subsidized this ferry service and Mr.

Moscola said we cover the cost of the trailer at the pier and also provide parking utilize Federal funding. Mr. Rupp asked if CMAC funds covered these expenses and was told it did. Mr. Moscola added that RIPTA also provides trolley service in season. Mr. Williams asked that the Board be provided with a summary of all costs associated with the ferry service.

Mr. Rupp summarized the challenges associated with RIPTA participating in providing ferry service this season. Mr. Moscola answered additional questions relative to the ferry operations and the riders who patronize the service.

Agenda Item 3: ARRA Program Update

Mark Therrien and Lilly Picchione addressed the Board to give a report on RIPTA's stimulus program and handed out a sheet detailing ARRA Program Projects dated August 20, 2009. Ms. Picchione noted that projects 2, 3, 4, & 7 will be in Phase II and projects 6, 8 & 10 are planned for Phase III.

Ms. Picchione briefly described the projects in the first phase including paratransit operations and support center equipment and furniture, Kennedy Plaza improvements, Elmwood Facility repairs and upgrades and the purchase of support vehicles. She then said a request for the projects in the second phase will be submitted to the Governor's office. These projects include: bus washes, support

equipment and the bus rapid transit corridor. The cost for the first and second phase projects were clearly detailed on the handout.

Ms. Picchione answered questions on the types of vehicles to be purchased and Mr. Therrien answered questions relative to Kennedy Plaza paving saying all of Kennedy Plaza, Washington and Dorrance Streets in front of the Biltmore and the East Approach would be paved. Mr. Moscola interjected that the paving would repair the “asphalt shaving” that has occurred in the Plaza which presents a potential pedestrian hazard.

Stephen Farrell, President of the Amalgamated Transit Union 618/618a, asked that the ARRA sheet be given to those in attendance. Ms. Mandly briefly left the room to copy the document. . . .

Mr. Field asked about the time frame for the paving and if penalties could be assessed for late completion. Mr. Mencarini responded that a liquidated damages clause would be included in the RFP. Mr. Moscola then answered additional questions regarding the support vehicles to be purchased. Ms. Picchione quoted the total cost as \$200,000 for 5 vehicles to be paid from 100% ARRA funds. Mr. Rupp asked the General Manager to compile a list of the new vehicles for the Board with a one to one comparison of the vehicle it is replacing.

Next Ms. Picchione said the Phase III grants must be ready for submission by December 31st. Mr. Therrien said that an operating

funds column will be added to the ARRA update sheet next month. Mr. Lewis noted that historically transit funds fell under RIPTA's preview however ARRA funds can be used for other services and the decision is made by the State.

Ms. Picchione continued discussing the TIP amendment and saying we need to go forward. Mr. Therrien said the next step is to focus on prioritizing.

Mr. Durkee asked about projects 9 – 12 and asked if they fell under a Phase IV. Ms. Picchione clarified that projects 9 and 11 are no longer budgeted with ARRA funds but are shown here for continuity, reflecting a decision to redirect ITS funds to BRT and the Elmwood facility. Mr. Therrien noted that project 12 is currently budgeted to RIDOT for Wickford Junction Station. Mr. Lewis commented that if the funds are not needed they will be redirected back to RIPTA.

Mr. Rupp asked about the possibility of converting a portion of ARRA funds to operating funds. Mr. Therrien said that 10% or \$3.7 million can be converted to operating funds. Mr. Moscola noted that \$4.1 million has been set aside for rail.

Mr. Moscola discussed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and said we are still doing homework on this topic but once we go with BRT a hybrid bus would be put on the route.

Mr. Rupp returned to the topic of converting ARRA funds to operating funds and said we need to be cautious. Mr. Lewis agreed that this is a one-time deal and we should not get used to relying on ARRA funds.

Agenda Item 4: New Paratransit Building Solar Panels

Mr. Therrien reminded those present that a short time ago the Finance Committee asked staff to look into grants available for energy conservation. Mr. Therrien has since done some research and found that the new paratransit building is not an attractive candidate for energy efficient solar panels, however RIPTA's existing structures are.

He continued saying the Economic Development Corporation has a combination of grants and loans for which RIPTA may be a strong candidate. Mr. Therrien said he will pursue this further to determine potential cost savings.

Mr. Rupp reiterated Mr. Field's comment last month that RIPTA is in a position to be a leader and it may be worth pursuing even if the savings are negligible. Mr. Durkee suggested also looking into the hot water component. Mr. Rupp asked Messrs Durkee and Field to work with Mr. Therrien on this project.

Agenda Item 5: New Flex Service

Mark Therrien and Anne Lecher addressed the Board to discuss new flex service. Mark introduced Anne Leclerc to the Board saying she is the principal planner on this project and an original designer of Flex service. Mr. Therrien passed out a Powerpoint presentation entitled South Aquidneck Flex Service July 8, 2009.

Mr. Therrien said that Flex geographically based call ahead service that is a difficult program to introduce into communities. The definition of Flex is: A vehicle traveling anywhere within a designated zone picking up or dropping off passengers and connecting to fixed route bus service for travel outside of the zone.

Ms. Leclerc elaborated saying it's a zone based service booked via reservations among various bus stops that connect to a fixed route that uses Ride Program vehicles which can enter neighborhoods. The driver typically picks up the passenger at the end of their driveway. While the service typically targets seniors, In the Woonsocket area child care trips have been added and are working well.

She said that RIPTA asks for reservations 48 hours prior to pick up and the service costs the same as fixed route service. It's based on a first come first served basis to transport passengers to work, appointments or shopping and the service works well in dense areas

Mr. Durkee asked if flex picks you up at home and takes you to a bus stop and Ms. Leclerc said it will take you to a bus stop, or your destination and that it moves passengers within a zone.

Mr. Lewis asked about trips per hour and she replied that Woonsocket the average is 2 – 4.5 trips per hour sometimes totaling 100 trips in a day. The service has just begun in Burrillville and we are already transporting about 30 people per day.

Mark Therrien distributed a map with bullets describing Statewide Flex service which would aim to place Flex service in every community, reduce dependence on Ride and service affordable housing locations and those who don't drive. He said that Flex was originally slated to serve Tiverton, Burrillville and Newport and currently we are running a combo Ride/Flex service to Tiverton.

Mr. Therrien said some of challenges of expanding Flex service are the spacing of the stops and passengers per route. Mr. Lewis commented that it also must be cost effective. Mr. Durkee said it's a remarkably personal service.

Mr. Lewis asked if Flex service is provided by other transit properties and Ms. Leclerc said it is used in rural western states, but it's called community service and taxis are also used. Mr. Therrien said he and Mr. McCormick based the model for RIPTA's Flex on the service provided in Ft. Worth, TX and Detroit's "Urban to Suburban" program.

Mr. Therrien answered questions about expansion and costs. Mr. Williams asked if this service would ultimately replace Ride and Anne said that is the hope, as most Flex passengers qualify for Ride. Mr. Durkee asked Mr. Therrien to explain how Flex differs from Ride and he discussed the differences.

Mr. Rupp asked Mr. Therrien and Ms. Leclerc to give examples of other locations where Flex can be implemented along with timeframes and cost summaries and come back at the November meeting. He commented that this sounds like a great service and he thinks it fills a need. Mr. Moscola said we are working on standards internally and will come back to the Board with updates periodically.

Agenda Item 6: Ride Program Update

Ed Scott addressed the Board to give a Ride Program update reminding them that in June they authorized staff to move forward with the Ride RFP which they issued on July 20th. A pre bid meeting was held on August 5th and last Thursday two bids were received. Staff is in the process of reviewing the bids and anticipates coming back before the Board with an award recommendation for approval at the September meeting.

He continued saying the new telephone reservation system in RIde is 100% operational and is making 800 calls per night informing passengers of pick up times. He said the system is a big success and soon Phase III will be implemented which includes a call ahead system allowing riders to create or cancel trips. Testing of this phase is underway and will soon be completed and moved onto the focus group stage.

Mr. Rupp asked if the two bids were for 20% of the RIde service and Mr. Scott said yes, 10 runs each in the Aquidneck Island and Woonsocket areas. Mr. Moscola clarified that the same providers bid the same areas. Mr. Rupp asked about costing of the bids and Mr. Scott replied that costing is still being evaluated, however the bidders were warned in the pre bid process to be economical in their pricing.

Mr. Scott answered some general questions about the bids, evaluation process and pricing. When asked if the program will be expanded Mr. Scott said Anne Leclerc is in discussions with methadone clinics and will contact other groups to evaluate this.

Mr. Field reported that RIPTA has received an unsolicited proposal from Rite Solutions and he encouraged them to make a presentation as it appears their technology could be valuable to RIPTA and could generate additional revenue by having RIPTA service other state agencies.

Mr. Field asked that the unsolicited proposal from Rite Solutions be added to the September agenda. Mr. Rupp remarked that the proposal was unsolicited, which is why it was not put on today's agenda, however he feels that the proposal can be best evaluated in Finance Committee.

Mr. Field agreed with the suggestion to evaluate the proposal in Finance Committee and noted that the Committee is short one member and asked Mr. Rupp if he could address this. Mr. Rupp asked for a volunteer to sit on Finance Committee and Rochelle Lee volunteered. Mr. Rupp accepted her offer and appointed Ms. Lee to serve on the Finance Committee.

Ms. Silveira stated for point of clarification that today's discussion of the unsolicited proposal was being addressed under agenda # 6 Ride Program update and also under agenda # 5 because it pertains to Flex service as well.

Agenda Item 8: Public Comment

Chairman Rupp asked for public comment now before executive session and recognized Stephen Farrell, President of the Amalgamated Transit Union. Mr. Farrell noted agenda item # 7 the executive session to discuss collective bargaining and said that last Thursday and Friday RIPTA and ATU met and exchanged proposals. Mr. Farrell said ATU considered all proposals from RIPTA and they

hope that the Authority will consider all proposals, ideas and memos from ATU.

Mr. Kennedy asked if the current labor agreement had expired and Mr. Moscola said it had on June 30th.

Mr. Rupp recognized Jim Lavoie from Rite Solutions. Mr. Lavoie introduced himself and his company and said that their unsolicited proposal offers RIPTA the opportunity to take a leadership position and add value.

Chairman Rupp recognized Bill McGee a retired RIPTA employee who said that last month he protested cuts in service in Auburn/Cranston area. Mr. McGee again asked that more service be added in this area because the new Park Cinema complex will be opening and the service is needed.

Mr. McGee added that he is still opposed to using cabs to provide service and he is against the purchase of hybrid vehicles. He said he has read about transit properties having difficulties with hybrid vehicles.

There being no further comments Mr. Rupp called for a brief recess.

Agenda Item 7: Executive Session

Mr. Rupp asked for a motion to convene an executive session as noticed on the agenda under 42-46-5(a)(2) to discuss collective bargaining. Mr. Williams made the motion and Mr. Durkee seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken on the motion to convene to executive session. All members voted unanimously to convene an executive session.

Following the Board's return to open session Ms. Lee made a motion to seal the minutes of the Executive Session, and Mr. Lewis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 9: Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Williams. Mr. Durkee seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen M. Mandly

Recording Secretary